





MEMOIRS

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OF

OLIVER CARLTON,

BY

LEVERETT SALTONSTALL.

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[FROM HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS OF THE ESSEX INSTITUTE, VOL. XX.]

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OF  
OLIVER CARLTON.

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BY LEVERETT SALTONSTALL.

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OLIVER CARLTON was born July 20, 1801, in what was then the North Parish of Amherst, Hillsborough County, N.H., but which, two years later, was incorporated as Mount Vernon. Situated on the highlands, overlooking the lovely valley of the Merrimac, it has always been a small but enterprising town, and has of late years become noted for its beautiful scenery and pure air.

Mr. Carlton descended from a line of ancestors, representatives of that admirable class of men who were the founders of New England; puritan farmers, who had to earn their bread and support their large families by the severest toil, while they sang praises, and poured out their hearts to God in their homes, at their daily tasks and in churches which they built, having scarcely bread for themselves and their children. May their descendants never cease to regard those God-fearing men with profound gratitude and veneration!

Mr. Carlton's first ancestor in this country was *Edward Carlton*, who was Freeman and a man of considerable im-

portance in Rowley, in 1642. He returned after some years to England with his wife and children, but soon sent over his son John, born in England about 1630, to settle his affairs here. John remained, settled in Bradford and Haverhill, where he died in 1668, leaving several sons, among whom was *Thomas*, who also resided in Bradford, and had five sons and daughters, the third being *George*, who was born Sept. 26, 1702. George married Mary, daughter of Samuel Hale of Bradford, removed from Bradford to Boxford, 1727, where he died in 1783, at the age of eighty, having had seven children most of whom survived him.

*Oliver*, his fourth son, born in 1732, left Boxford in early manhood and settled in North Amherst, afterwards Mount Vernon. He married Emma, daughter of John Washer of Amherst, and had six children, all of whom lived to maturity and had families of their own.

*John*, the oldest, was born in 1762, and in March 1781 married Judith, daughter of Daniel and Mary (Hartshorne) Weston of Amherst. He died Dec. 18, 1838, aged 76. He was the father of *Oliver Carlton*. The strong character of the family was conspicuous in the grandfather, Deacon Oliver Carlton, who was one of the founders of the church, which in 1780 colonized from the mother church on "Amherst Plain." The settlers were few in number, and had scant store of this world's goods, but were blessed with brave and zealous hearts. What they lacked in riches was more than made up by their energy and determination.

With the Deacon at their head, the very next season they hauled the timber in the month of April on the snow-crust over the walls and fences, worked all summer, and with an amount of toil and self-sacrifice which it is difficult in these days of luxury and self-indulgence to con-

ceive, they erected their church which still stands on the summit of the hill, a monument to those brave Christian men,—the only church there is, or ever has been, within the limits of the town.

Deacon Oliver devoted time and money to the building of this church, so much to the neglect of his own affairs, that he was forced to sell a yoke of oxen to cancel his indebtedness.

It is related that his son John passed his honeymoon in helping his father haul logs over the snow-crust for the new meeting-house. He was elected deacon of the church in 1800 to take the place of his father, who died that year. Deacon John was a prominent and respected citizen, for many years a justice of the peace, and held other offices in the old and new town.

Oliver Carlton was born in the ancestral house, worked on the same farm, roamed over hill and dale, enjoying the lovely scenery, breathing the bracing air, and regularly worshipped in the old meeting-house, two miles distant, the more sacred from its association with his father's and his grandfather's manly zeal and devotion. Here he attended the little district school during the winter months, until, at the age of seventeen, in the year 1818, he felt that irresistible desire to obtain an education which led him to enter Phillips Academy, at Andover, then under the charge of John Adams, LL. D. On one of the earliest broad-sides of the school is seen the name of the New Hampshire boy in company with others which have obtained an honorable record. William Adams, who had "lodgings at the Principal's," presided at the Centennial celebration in 1878, when Dr. Holmes turned to him as he read :

"Such he, whose record time's destroying march  
Leaves uneffaced on Zion's springing arch."

Dr. Luther V. Bell, U. S. Senator Bell, Rev. Drs. Amos

Blanchard, Theodore Edson, Alexander H. Vinton, Hubbard Winslow and President Leonard Woods, with Edmund Quincy and Samuel H. Stearns of Bedford, to whom the Centennial poet so tenderly alluded, are all on that broadside. So are Daniel P. King of Danvers, Nathaniel and Robert Hooper of Marblehead and Samuel M. Worcester of Salem. Other pupils at Andover with him were Washington Choate of Essex and, last but not least, Robert Ran-toul of Beverly.

He entered Dartmouth College in 1820 and graduated in 1824, with the second honors of the class. Rev. Darwin Adams, son of Dr. Daniel, born in the same year, brought up with him in Mt. Vernon, and his classmate at Andover, was his chum during part of his college course and still (May, 1883) survives him at Groton. After graduating, Mr. Carlton very soon adopted the profession of teacher, and in 1825 taught school at Francestown, N. H., was tutor at Dartmouth 1825-6, was in charge of schools at Windsor, Vt., in 1827, at Haverhill, Mass., from 1827 to 1830, at Marblehead from 1830 to 1832, and in 1832 was placed in charge of the Latin Grammar School at Salem, where he remained till that school, greatly to the regret of all its old pupils, was discontinued. This occurred in the year 1856. Mr. Carlton then taught in Portsmouth N. H., from 1856 to 1860, after which he returned to Salem and kept a private school from 1860 to 1867.

After forty years and more of teaching, with a high reputation for uprightness and ability as a teacher, he retired to private life in Salem, where he had passed so many of the best years of his life, and on the twenty-first day of June, 1882, passed peacefully away at his home in Bridge St., soothed by the devoted care of his daughters, and cheered by many of his loving friends and old pupils. It was as master of the old grammar school that we most of us

remember him, and how vividly he stands before us! After the lapse of forty-three years, each lineament of his kind countenance, every tone of his voice is as if seen and heard only yesterday. His very step, as he entered the old school in Broad street; his erect bearing and elastic gait; his smile of approval, more frequent than his severe frown of displeasure; his hearty laugh at any amusing mistake or innocent error,— all are distinctly remembered. What boy ever dared utter a falsehood to Mr. Carlton? or who ever ventured even to whisper to him a tale of another?

His teaching of the classics was excellent, his boys entered college as well prepared as those from the best schools; but what was far better, they went to college and forth into the world with that high sense of honor that in so marked a degree distinguished his pupils. Ask any of them whether the boy who had committed a misdemeanor ever sat silent, if Mr. Carlton rose, and, in his earnest manner, asked who was guilty of it! The tone of the school was such that any pupil met the contempt of his companions by refusing to confess his fault under such circumstances.

The contrast between the past and present modes of school-teaching is very striking. Mr. Carlton taught six hours daily (except during the few weeks in winter, when the shortness of the days made it a little less) for forty-eight weeks in the year. There were vacations of two weeks at the end of August, one week at Thanksgiving and one week in May — four weeks altogether.

Without any assistant, he presided over and taught six classes of boys, from grammar and sums in addition, to the full requirements for entering college, through all the courses of Latin, Greek, arithmetic, algebra and rhetoric, declamation, geography and history, ancient and modern. His system was so admirable that his pupils

did their work in school, and parents were spared the misery of having every evening to help their unhappy sons to learn their lessons.

The modern methods of schools, with their enormous equipment and vast expenditure, seem, in their results, to fall far short of the modest school, where Mr. Carlton so admirably and so manfully taught his boys to become men. Mr. Carlton had a warm temper, but kept it under perfect control, except on those rare occasions when he had good reason for becoming angry ; and he who had excited his displeasure never cared to repeat his error.

His interest in his pupils followed them through life, often leading to a warm and affectionate correspondence ; and many a time has he expressed the deepest regret to those, whose convictions have led them to work with a political party opposed to his own.

Mr. Carlton was a Puritan like his fathers, but with liberal and advanced views. One of his old scholars writes that he became exceedingly interested in the recent agitation attending the nomination of a professor at Andover. While the controversy was at its height, he met a minister who had said "the people will not indorse him;" but, laying his hand heavily upon the table, Mr. Carlton said, "I told him the people would indorse the appointment. Don't you believe there is any progress? Do you think God revealed everything to the Jews?"

The Rev. De Witt S. Clark, minister of the Tabernacle Church, of which Mr. Carlton was for many years a member, and at one time superintendent of its Sunday School, writes "there was a decided ripening and mellowness of Christian character in his later years, which was evident even to the casual observer." "A broad charity ruled his spirit, and he would find good in many a man another pronounced a heretic, and would often say, he wished he

was as sure of Heaven as he thought such a one to be. As he grew older he came less and less to insist on the *creed*, and more and more on the *covenant* which a Christian makes with his God. The simpler the Confession of Faith,— the nearer it came to stating the *essentials* of doctrine, and no more, the better he liked it.” “‘The time is coming,’ he used to say, ‘I may not live to see it, when Christians will think and say less of that in which they differ, than of those things in which they are agreed.’”

“ Always in his place in church and in the social meeting, so long as he was able to walk, always ready to give his testimony as to the worth and power of the truths of the Gospel to himself, yet never thrusting himself forward, speaking often with an earnestness which seemed to some almost passion, but oftener with a trembling voice and moistened eye, his presence was an inspiration. His sharp look, his erect form, his head moving quickly in assent, his brow rising suddenly as in question, might well be the text for any who was addressing an audience. He kept one up to his best.”

“ If vigor of conduct and precision of thought and patient endeavor during the earlier years of life bring such marked and delightful bearing and spirit to grace the latter days, then may the race of such old-fashioned school-masters never be extinct! Having received the kingdom of Heaven as a little child, certainly its possession seemed to be held to the end with a child’s joyful simplicity of faith and love. He has left a vacant place among us which it is hard to fill, and which will not be filled till men of as sincere heart and careful training appear among us.”

Mr. Carlton was very tenacious of his convictions, especially in politics, and nothing seemed to disturb him more than the divergence of views between himself and a

few of his old pupils, whom he held in special regard ; but never did he suffer this for a moment to cloud the relations with them.

He had a brave spirit and undaunted courage. At the age of eighty-one he met with the severe and painful accident from which he never recovered, and bore his sufferings with the most Christian resignation and fortitude.

The kind friend and former pupil, before alluded to, writes, that "he looked up smiling and said, 'I hope they won't keep me here long, and that I shall walk out again.' He bore very patiently the treatment which his physician thought best, although it must have been very painful. I never went into his room without receiving a pleasant smile, and a shake of the hand, although sometimes he could not or would not speak."

And so passed away at the ripe age of eighty-one, this excellent man, one of the last, if not the last, of the schoolmasters "of the old school," retaining to the last his interest in his old pupils, proud of their successes, regretting their mistakes, grieving over their failures ; and by them, in return, respected and beloved, with a deep sense of gratitude, for that high sense of honor and that manliness of character with which he inspired them, and which are more important than all they learned from books.

## APPENDIX.

EDWARD CARLTON<sup>1</sup>, a freeman and man of importance in Rowley, 1642, returned after some years to England with wife and children born in Rowley. Soon after he sent over his son John, born in England about 1630, to settle his affairs. John remained here.

JOHN CARLTON<sup>2</sup> married Hannah, daughter of first Joseph Jewett; settled in Bradford and Haverhill; died in Haverhill 22 Nov., 1668. His widow afterwards married in Salem 5 Aug., 1676, Christopher Babbidge. Said John and Hannah had several children, all sons, among whom was

THOMAS CARLTON<sup>3</sup> married Elizabeth ——; lived in Bradford. Their children born in Bradford were:

1 Thomas, b. 10 Oct., 1697.

2 Bethiah, b. 8 May, 1700; m. Wm. Hoehem, in Bradford; d. 2 Feb., 1721.

3 George, b. 26 Sept., 1702. See below.

4 Elizabeth, b. 7 March, 1706.

5 John, b. 29 July, 1708.

GEORGE CARLTON<sup>4</sup>, son of Thomas above, married Mary, daughter of Samuel Hale of Boxford, 9 Nov., 1725.

He first resided in Bradford, and removed to Boxford, 1727. They were dismissed from First Church in Bradford and admitted to Second Church in Boxford 1 July, 1767. She died in Boxford 28 Nov., 1780, aged 75 years. He died in Boxford 13 Feb., 1783, aged 80 years.

His will, dated 1 June, 1770, proved 3 March, 1783, Vol. 56, f. 28.

## Inscriptions on their gravestones in West Boxford.

" In memory of  
 Ens<sup>n</sup> George Carlton  
 who departed this  
 Life Feb. 13, 1783  
 In the 81<sup>st</sup> year  
 of his age."

" In memory of  
 Mrs Mary Carlton  
 the wife of  
 Ens<sup>n</sup> George Carlton  
 who departed this Life  
 Nov ye 28, 1780  
 in the 76 year of  
 her age."

## Children :

- 1 Samuel, b. 22 June, 1726-7, in Bradford; m. Rebecca Goodridge of Boxford, 17 May, 1750; resided in Boxford. They had eight children. Frazier Carlton of Salem was a grandson.
- 2 George, b. 20 Dec., 1728, in Boxford; m. Abigail Tyler of Boxford, 4 June, 1749; resided in Boxford; had seven children.
- 3 Thomas, b. 10 Nov., 1730, in Boxford; m. Jane Stickney, 28 Nov., 1754: lived in Boxford; had three children.
- 4 Oliver, b. 11 Sept., 1732, in Boxford; settled in Mount Vernon, N. H. (grandfather of Oliver Carlton, of Salem).
- 5 William, b. 8 Dec., 1734, in Boxford; living in 1770.
- 6 Mary, b. ——; m. Samuel Ayers of Haverhill 7 Oct., 1761.
- 7 Sarah, b. ——; m. Thomas Hovey of Boxford, 21 July, 1762.

OLIVER CARLTON<sup>5</sup>, fourth son of above, born 11 Sept., 1732, in Boxford, married Emma Washer, daughter of John Washer of Amherst. He settled in North parish of Amherst, N. H., afterward Mt. Vernon; died 1800; had six children, all of whom lived to maturity and had families of their own.<sup>1</sup>

JOHN CARLTON<sup>6</sup>, the oldest child of the above, was born Oct. 16, 1762; married March, 1781, Judith Weston, daughter of Daniel and Mary (Hartshorne) Weston, of Amherst. She was born March 29, 1763, and died Nov. 25, 1824. He died Dec. 18, 1838, aged 76. A

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<sup>1</sup> Enoch removed to Lamoile Co., Vt. Stephen was a physician in Acworth. Olive married a Farnum, and died in Claremont at the age of 92.

second wife, Mrs. Tabitha (Wilkins) Gilmore, sister of the mother of Gen. John A. Dix, survived him nearly ten years.

Deacon John and Judith (Weston) had twelve children, six sons and six daughters. Four died in childhood. Emma died in 1812, at the age of 26. Mary married Dr. Luther Smith of Hillsborough, and was mother of Hon. Charles J. Smith, the antiquary. John, the oldest son, lived on the paternal homestead, married Frances Lewis, and died Jan. —, 1868, at the age of 80. His son, John Adams Carlton, occupies the same place and has seven children.

OLIVER CARLTON<sup>7</sup>, eleventh child of the above, born in Mt. Vernon, N. H., July 20, 1801, married 1st, Margaretta, daughter of Judge Clifton Claggett of Amherst, N. H., in April, 1828 (she died 1829), and by her he had one child, Clifton Claggett, who died in infancy; married 2nd, Louisa Amelia, daughter of Hon. Bailey Bartlett of Haverhill, Mass., Nov. 30, 1831. She was born Oct. 17, 1809; died June 20, 1840, leaving four children :

- 1 Edwin Bartlett, b. Nov. 2, 1832; lost overboard in the Indian Ocean, Nov. 1851.
- 2 William Jarvis, b. May 12, 1835; m. Eliza Ham of Danvers; a young merchant in Salem; died 1865.
- 3 Joseph G. S., b. Aug. 10, 1837; m. a daughter of Albert Field of Taunton.
- 4 Mary Louisa, b. Oct. 18, 1838.

Married 3d, Aug. 18, 1841, Mary Smith, daughter of Rev. David Smith of Portland, born July 23, 1803, died March —, 1874, leaving one child, Harriet Elizabeth, born July 28, 1842.

He died June 21, 1882.



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